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ABSTRACT

A study explored whether religion--both that of the reporter and that of the audience--has an impact on news judgment. The news service used was the Lutheran World Information (LWI). Religion writers and editors for the 42 daily newspapers that receive the Lutheran World Information weekly news packets were surveyed by telephone. Completed interviews were obtained from 35 respondents, who indicated their definition of religion news, their preference for stories about certain types of religion news, their use of LWI news, and their evaluation of the LWI news service according to a number of journalistic criteria. Results suggest that use of a particular religion news source depends for the most part on the news judgment of the religion writers and editors and on characteristics of the situation in which they work. The data indicate that the strongest predictor of use is the religion journalists' belief that the news source is an accurate source of information. Although the extent to which personal beliefs influence story preference and perception is beyond the scope of this study, it does seem to indicate that the question of whether a religious or a nonreligious person should cover the news may be too simplistic. (DF)

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Predicting Religion Reporters' Use of a Denominational News Service

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Predicting Religion Reporters'
Use of a Denominational News Service

Both the prominence of religious issues in the 1984 presidential election campaign and the recent reassignment of an Associated Press Montana statehouse reporter to a desk job following publication of an article about the relations between his religious views and his work as a journalist[1] have focused attention on the connection between personal beliefs and values and public behavior. These events give new importance to the question religion journalists have long been asking themselves: Should a religious person or a non-religious one cover the religion beat?

Although both a survey of religion journalists by Ranly[2] and anecdotal evidence[3] indicate that religion specialists are concerned about the effect their personal beliefs may have on their reporting, neither studies of religion news coverage nor more general investigations of gatekeepers' behavior directly address this concern. Only a content analysis by Hart, Turner and Knupp[4] of religion news in Time magazine even raises the question. However, the authors quickly dismiss the suggestion that the religion of the writers and editors is an important influence on religion news coverage in favor of the contention that it is really the number of adherents a particular religion can claim among the Eastern elites who are Time's real audience that determines which religions are covered most heavily.

A study by Tronstad[5] suggesting that religion editors for daily newspapers are likely to allocate the available news space among churches roughly according to a church's strength within the circulation area lends support to Hart et al.'s contention. However, a study by Bromley, Shupe and Ventimiglia[6] indicates that religion editors may also devote considerable news space to groups that concern readers even though those groups have few local members.

These studies suggest that both the religion of the newspaper gatekeeper and the religious make-up of the community in which the newspaper circulates may influence news selection. Other studies of religion news suggest religion reporters may be influenced by their perception of audience interests and needs or by a personal preference for stories with certain news values such as proximity, impact, conflict or human interest.[7] However, a few studies seem to suggest gatekeepers will favor those organizations they consider most credible and report religion news from the perspective of those sources.[8]

More general studies of gatekeepers' behavior shed little additional light on the gatekeeping behavior of religion journalists. Studies of other specialty reporters, for example, indicate that these gatekeepers usually read most of the news releases they receive and may use as much as 75 percent of the output of a single trusted source.[9] A study by Tichenor, Olien and Donohue indicates that sources who share an editor's perception of what

the audience wants and needs have an advantage over those who do not operate on the same assumptions about the audience,[10] but other investigators conclude situational constraints or the education and experience of the reporter can cause specialty reporters to favor one source over another.[11]

However, none of these studies of gatekeeping behavior explored the possibility that personal religious beliefs or values might lead a reporter to favor one source over another. Few attempted to assess the relative impact of several potential influences on gatekeepers' behavior.

Therefore, this study was designed to determine whether religion -- both that of the reporter and that of the audience -- has an impact on news judgment. It was also designed to test the relative ability of a number of potential influences to predict a gatekeeper's use of a particular religion news source. Besides religion, factors explored in this study include standard demographic characteristics, reporters' preferences for certain kinds of news, their assessment of audience needs, their judgments about the journalistic quality of the news source, and situational constraints imposed on the religion specialist by the nature of the newspaper and of the community.

Methodology

The News Source

This study used Lutheran World Information (LWI), the news service operated by the Lutheran World Federation, Geneva,

Switzerland, as the news source because funding was available from this organization.[12] However, the source is an appropriate one for this kind of investigation. As a Lutheran news service, LWI provides news about the concerns of a religion which is the third largest Christian confessional group worldwide and also the third largest Protestant religion in the United States.[13] The news this service provides can be presumed to have a certain inherent newsworthiness at the same time LWI's position as an international news agency means that many of the stories provided will be about issues and events of little immediate concern within the United States.[14] Therefore, this news service may be differentially attractive to religion news gatekeepers depending on their particular orientations toward news, their perceptions of audience needs and interest, their background and training, and the situations in which they work.

The Survey of Gatekeepers

Religion writers and editors for the 42 daily newspapers which receive the Lutheran World Information weekly news packets were surveyed by telephone between July 14 and July 29, 1981. Completed interviews were obtained with 35 religion writers and editors for a response rate of 83 percent.

Interviewers were instructed not to mention the funding agency at the beginning of the interview because a pre-test of the questionnaire on four journalists familiar with religion news indicated

that some respondents might be reluctant to answer any questions if they were unfamiliar with the Lutheran World Federation or did not use the Lutheran World Information news service while other respondents might give an unwarranted "Lutheran flavor" to their answers to the general questions about religion news. At the conclusion of the interview, however, all respondents were told the identity of the funding agency as well as why the decision was made not to mention the Lutheran World Federation or Lutheran World Information at the beginning of the interview.

The survey instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and fixed-response items that took about 20 minutes to administer. Questions asked the respondents about their definition of religion news, their preference for stories about certain types of religion news, their use of LWI news and their evaluation of the LWI news service according to a number of journalistic criteria. The gatekeepers were also asked to describe the audience for religion news in their newspapers by means of fixed-response questions that included the uses and gratifications measures found in previous studies of religion in the mass media.[15] The last section of the questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information about the religion specialists similar to the data collected by Ranly.[16]

After all surveys were completed, information concerning the percent of Lutherans in the county of publication of each newspaper,[17] and information on the circulation, size of news

hole, time of publication of each newspaper, and the number of competing newspapers in each publication area was added to each questionnaire.[18]

Multiple regression analysis and simple correlations were used to explore factors which might help explain which gatekeepers use LWI most heavily and which ones rarely use the news service. Because this study involves only 35 religion specialists, it was necessary to restrict the potential predictors of LWI use that could be entered into a single regression equation. Therefore, questions representing potential predictors were grouped into five categories tapping the gatekeeper's preference for types of news, the gatekeeper's perceptions of the audience for religion news, the gatekeeper's evaluation of LWI as a news source, the gatekeeper's background and experience, and conditions at the newspaper and in the community where the gatekeeper works.

In order to further limit the number of potential predictors of the religion reporters' use of LWI, factor analysis was used to identify clusters of news preferences and perceptions of the audience. Scales based on these factors were used in the regression analysis when possible. Whenever scales with satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alpha $\geq .7$) could not be constructed, the item with the strongest loading on each factor was used to represent a particular type of news or audience orientation.

Predictors within each category were analyzed first. Then the best predictor within each category was entered into a final

regression equation to determine the relative influence of the best predictors of gatekeepers' use of LWI news. Significance figures are not reported because the respondents are a population of all religion journalists at daily newspapers who received LWI during the summer of 1981.

The Variables

For this study, use of LWI news was determined by responses to the single question, "How much do you use LWI?" Possible answers were "a lot," "some," "a little," and "not at all."

Measures of news preferences considered as potential predictors of gatekeepers' use of LWI included individual questions asking the gatekeeper how important it is to cover stories about religious beliefs and practices, and news from the local, national, and international scene, as well as scales measuring the importance of news about traditional religious activities, Judeo-Christian religions, and other religions. The religious activities scale combined responses to questions about the importance of covering news of ongoing programs and projects and news about one-time events, missions and evangelism work, and social ministry projects. The Judeo-Christian scale combined responses to questions about the importance of covering news of Jews, Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants, while the other religions scale combined responses to questions about the importance of covering sects and cults and any "other religions" not included in the fixed-response questions. Possible responses to all

individual questions included "very important," "somewhat important," "not very important," and "not at all important."

Measures of the gatekeepers' perceptions of audience interests and needs included in this study as potential predictors included single questions about how important religion news is to readers as a source of information for making political decisions, for knowing oneself better, for obtaining spiritual guidance, and for entertainment, as well as religiously-oriented information seeker and surveillance-oriented information seeker scales. The religiously-oriented scale combined respondents' answers to questions about how much their audience reads religion news for information about their own religion, other religions, and for information about correct behavior. The surveillance-oriented scale combined responses to questions about how much their audience reads religion news to keep tabs on what is going on, hear what others have to say, and avoid loneliness. Possible responses to individual questions included "very important," "somewhat important," "not very important," and "not at all important."

Measures of gatekeepers' evaluations of LWI as possible predictors of use of the news service included responses to single questions about the accuracy, objectivity, timeliness, and importance of the stories and the quality of writing. Possible responses to each question were "excellent," "good," "fair," and "poor."

Demographic predictors included the gatekeeper's sex, years of professional experience, and religion, as well as whether the religion specialist had earned an advanced degree, studied religion in college, or studied journalism in college. In order to include religion among the predictor variables, the gatekeepers' religious preferences were grouped into five categories ordered to represent closeness in beliefs and practices to Lutheranism. These categories were (1) Lutheran, (2) other liturgical hierarchical churches such as Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Orthodox, (3) other Christian churches, (4) non-Christian religions, and (5) no religious belief. Respondents who would not disclose their religious beliefs were omitted from this portion of the analysis.

Situational factors included in this study as potential predictors of use of LWI included the circulation of the newspaper, an estimate of the paper's news hole, the level of competition in the city where it is published, and the percent of Lutherans in the county where the newspapr is published.

Analysis

Gatekeepers' News Preference as Predictors

Of the seven orientations toward religion news that were considered as potential predictors, both multiple regression analysis and simple correlations indicated that interest in stories about other religions and in stories about religious beliefs and practices are the best predictors of a gatekeeper's use of LWI, although only interest in news of other religions achieved even

moderate strength as a predictor. The other orientations toward religion news appear to have little predictive value. (See Table 1)

These seven news orientations accounted for little, if any, of the variance in use of LWI news. However, the findings do provide some insight into reasons gatekeepers may turn to a particular news source.

Although it is not particularly surprising that gatekeepers who are interested in news about religious beliefs and practices should turn to a denominational news service as a relatively good source of stories about a particular religion, it does seem strange at first that a scale combining measures of interest in stories about sects and cults and about religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition should be the best predictor of use of a particular Christian news service. However, it may be that this combined measure taps interest both in any religion that is not particularly strong within a newspaper's circulation area and interest in stories about religion in regions not usually associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition. If that is the case, then gatekeepers with this news preference may turn to LWI as a convenient source of the most important news about Lutherans, who are a minority among Protestants in most areas of the United States, as well as for the stories from areas of the world not traditionally associated with Christianity that an international news service such as LWI can be expected to provide.

That neither preference for news about Judeo-Christian religions nor for news about traditional religious activities is a particularly good predictor of LWI use undoubtedly means simply that interest in these two kinds of news is so general among these gatekeepers that neither measure has much predictive value. It is also true, of course, that religion writers have so many other sources for these kinds of stories that they have little reason to turn to any particular denominational source to satisfy these interests.

Perceptions of the Audience as Predictors

Of the six images of the audience that were considered, a belief that readers want news to help them survey and keep in touch with the religious community is a moderately good predictor of a gatekeeper's use of LWI. The belief that the reader wants information relevant to making political decisions is a moderately weak predictor, as is the related belief that the reader is comparatively uninterested in information designed to foster an understanding of appropriate religious behavior. However, the other images of the audience appear to be only tenuously related to using LWI as an information source. (See Table 2)

The findings seem consistent with an awareness on the part of gatekeepers that LWI news provides news stories and background information, not features or devotional material.[19] However, the negative association between use of LWI and the image of the audience as wanting information useful for understanding correct beliefs and behavior, as well as the weak relation between use of LWI and

the other images of the audience may reflect little more than these gatekeepers' rather general dislike for stories that would provide spiritual guidance or be merely entertaining.

Evaluations of LWI as Predictors

Regardless of the kinds of stories a news service provides or the kinds a media gatekeeper may find personally attractive or may believe readers want, it would be unreasonable to expect a journalist to use a news service that provided unsatisfactory stories. However, as predictors of use of LWI, the gatekeepers' evaluations of the news service seem rather paradoxical.

Both multiple regression analysis and simple correlations indicated that a gatekeeper's belief that LWI stories are accurate is a strong predictor of use of the news service. However, an attendant belief that the news service does <u>not</u> provide objective information is also a moderately strong predictor of use. The gatekeepers' perception that the stories are not particularly important, well-written, or timely are weak to moderate predictors of use. (See Table 3).

Although it seems rather surprising that a gatekeeper's belief a news service is accurate and also the belief that it is unobjective are both highly predictive of use of that news service, it may be that gatekeepers turn to LWI -- or to any denominational news service -- because they want information about a particular religious viewpoint, but they find the news service useful for

their purposes only if that service presents the viewpoint accurately.

That gatekeepers might use a news service whose stories are not always timely or well-written also seems puzzling at first. But it may be that only those gatekeepers who actually use the service regularly are in a position to notice that the service, however good it may be in general terms, is not always as good as they might like.

Personal Characteristics as Predictors

The kinds of stories that religion writers and editors find personally appealing, the kinds of information they believe their readers want and their evaluations of various news sources all may depend on the journalists' background and training. These personal characteristics also play a role in the gatekeeper's decision to use a particular news service.

Using both regression analysis and simple correlations, religious preference was found to be a moderate predictor of use of LWI as a news source. In addition, having studied journalism or religion in college and being male were almost as good as religious preference as predictors of LWI use. Neither years of professional experience nor having earned an advanced degree appeared to make much difference in a gatekeeper's use of LWI. (See Table 4).

That being Lutheran or being a member of a church with beliefs

and practices compatible with Lutheranism is the personal characteristic best able to predict use of Lutheran World Information suggests at first that journalists may be biased in favor of news sources with whom they personally agree or with whom they share an interest in subject matter. But such an interpretation may be unwarranted. It should be remembered that when journalists' evaluations of the news service were considered, these same journalists recognized the fact that LWI does represent a particular religious viewpoint. Furthermore, use of LWI by these journalists may be rather general. This study did not differentiate between use of a news source for background information or surveillance purposes and actual use of stories from a news service. Neither did this study address the important questions of how many stories from the news service these journalists use, whether they use LWI more heavily than other similar sources, which stories they actually use, nor how appropriate these stories are for the audience the gatekeeper serves.

The ranking of journalistic training as the second best predictor suggests that many gatekeepers, socialized to the norms of their profession, will be uncomfortable ignoring any readily available source of information. This possibility gains credence from the fact that those journalists with the least professional experience are the ones most likely to consult the news service. These journalists may not have had enough time to develop a stable of personal news sources.[20] They may need to use news releases

more often if they are to produce the required number of stories each week. But it may also be true that they are the ones whose journalism education is most recent. Therefore, they may best remember their professors' injunctions not to ignore an available information source.

Although sex appears to be a reasonably good predictor of a gatekeeper's use of LWI, the strength of this predictor may be related to situational constraints which also affect a gatekeeper's use of LWI. Most of the eight women gatekeepers in this study work in situations which are not conducive to using LWI (see next section).

Situational Constraints as Predictors

Like most other specialty reporters, the religion writers and editors included in this study work with a minimum of direct supervision. Therefore, they are relatively free to define religion news as they choose and to turn to those sources they deem most appropriate. But, in spite of this comparative freedom, they are not immune to institutional and situational pressures.

Although the respondents were not asked specific questions about constraints on their work, individuals mentioned a formal or informal newspaper policy or an editor's demand that they cover certain religions more heavily than others or even that they reject certain kinds of stories or certain sources of information. They also mentioned problems of too little time in which to produce the many stories expected of them each week. These, and similar

constraints, are related to the kind of newspaper for which the gatekeeper works and the community in which the newspaper is located.

Using regression analysis and simple correlations, the percent of Lutherans in the population was found to be a moderate predictor of a gatekeeper's use of LWI. In marked contrast, other situational factors such as circulation, the size of the news hole and the level of competition were, at best, weak predictors of use of LWI. (See Table 5)

The substantial effect that being in a Lutheran community has on a gatekeeper's use of a Lutheran news source should come as little surprise. Many religion journalists are required to cover news from their local communities and also other news that has implications for their readers. In a Lutheran community journalists may find themselves devoting more coverage to Lutheran churches and Lutheran institutions simply because there are more such organizations clamoring for attention. But beyond news from these local organizations, gatekeepers in these communities may turn to supplementary Lutheran news services because Lutheran events, issues, and decisions at the national and international levels may have important repercussions in a Lutheran community but have little relevance for readers in areas of the country where the religion is not as strong.

Although the other situational constraints are relatively poor predictors of use of LWI, they do suggest that reporters who

work at small newspapers with a relatively large news hole may be required to produce so many stories to fill the available space each week that they sometimes turn to news releases to help them cope with the pressures of their jobs.

The Best Predictors

Using the strongest predictor from each category of predictors in the same regression equation indicated that these five variables account for nearly one-fourth of the variation in gatekeeper's use of Lutheran World Information. Of these predictors, belief that LWI provides accurate information and that readers of religion news are interested in stories that will help them keep track of events and issues are moderately strong predictors. The percent of Lutherans in an area and the gatekeeper's interest in providing information about a wide range of religions are weak predictors, while the gatekeeper's own religious beliefs appear to have even less influence on news judgment. (See Table 6)

These findings suggest that gatekeepers may try to subordinate their own values and preferences to those of their audience. Clearly, these religion writers and editors appear to be most influenced in their use of LWI by what they believe their readers want and need. In Lutheran areas, this means heavy coverage of news about Lutherans and Lutheran organizations. Some of these gatekeepers apparently use LWI because they believe it to be an accurate source of national and international news that may be important to their readers.

Summary and Conclusion

The results of this study suggest use of a particular religion news source, Lutheran World Information, depends for the most part on the news judgment of the religion writers and editors and on characteristics of the situation in which they work. The data indicate that the strongest predictor of use is a belief on the part of religion journalists that LWI is an accurate source of information. But use also depends on a perception that LWI provides a distinctive religious perspective.

The gatekeepers most likely to use LWI are those who are either Lutheran or a member of a church with a religious philosophy compatible with Lutheranism, who personally believe it is important to cover many different religions, and who say their audience reads religion news primarily for surveillance purposes. The gatekeepers who use LWI most heavily are also likely to work for newspapers with small circulations but rather large news holes and which circulate in areas of the country where Lutheranism is particularly strong.

These findings suggest that religion does, indeed, play an important role in the professional news judgment of religion writers and editors. Among the demographic characteristics, religion may, in fact, be the best predictor of a gatekeeper's use of a particular denominational news source. But the gatekeeper's own religious preference is not as good a predictor of

use of that source as are situational constraints over which the gatekeeper has little control or as other aspects of news judgment which can be learned.

Both a preference for covering many different religions and a perception that the audience wants and needs religion news for surveillance purposes are predictors consistent with journalistic norms. However, it should be noted that acceptance of norms favoring coverage of many different religions through stories intended to serve a surveillance function may be more compatible with some personal religious beliefs than with others.

The extent to which personal beliefs influence story preference and a perception of the audience is clearly beyond the scope of this study. At the same time, this study would seem to indicate that the question of whether a religious person or a non-religious person should cover the news may be too simplistic. While there almost certainly are differences in gatekeeping behavior between religious and non-religious persons, this study suggests there may also be important differences within the religious group depending on the particular beliefs to which a religious person subscribes.

Because this study examined the gatekeeping behavior of only a very small group of journalists toward a single denominational news source, the study needs to be replicated using more journalists and other religion news sources. Such studies should also examine the news provided by each news service and the number and

nature of the stories selected from those sources in order to provide a more complete answer to what is, after all, the underlying question: Do journalists routinely make inappropriate professional decisions on the basis of their personal religious beliefs?

Notes

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5. Janet Tronstad, "A Perspective on Pluralism: An Analysis of Louis Cassel's UPI Column, 'Religion in America,' 19591973," unpublished masters thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., 1977.

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12. The Lutheran World Federation's Department of Communication commissioned the author to conduct an evaluation of the organization's news service with the understanding the data would be reused in other studies of religion news. For a report of that evaluation, see: Judith M. Buddenbaum, Survey of Religion News Editors and Writers (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 1982).

13. Figures are from Media Development, 28(1):22. 1981; and Douglas W. Johnson, Paul R. Picard and Bernard Quinn, eds., Churches and Church Membership in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Glenmary Research Center, 1974).

14. For a content analysis of Lutheran World Information news, see: Judith M. Buddenbaum, "Religion and News: Factors Associated with the Selection of Stories from an International Religion News Service by Daily Newspapers," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind., 1984, pp. 101-140.

15. Judith M. Buddenbaum, "Characteristics and Media-Related Needs of the Audience for Religious TV," Journalism Quarterly, 58(2):266-272. 1981; Walter Gantz and Paul Kowalewski, "Religious Broadcasting as an Alternative to TV: An Initial Assessment of Potential Utilization of the Christian Broadcasting Network," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism annual convention, Houston, Texas, August 1979.

16. Ranly, loc. cit.

17. Data taken from Johnson, Picard and Quinn, loc. cit.

18. Data taken from Editor and publisher, International Yearbook (New York: Editor and Publisher, 1981).

19. Buddenbaum, "Religion and News." loc cit.

20. Lacey and Matustik, loc. cit.

Table 1

News Preferences as Predictors of
Gatekeepers' Use of Lutheran World Information

News Preference	betaa	r
Judeo-Christian News	.12	.22
Religious Activities	.01	.20
News of Beliefs-Practices	.21	.19
News of Other Religions	.32	.29
Local News	-.12	-.05
National News	.07	.01
International News	-.18	-.12

n = 35
R^2 = .16 Adjusted R^2 = 0

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studies are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

Table 2

Perceptions of the Audience as Predictors of Gatekeepers' Use of Lutheran World Information

Perceptions of Audience	beta[a]	r
Religiously-oriented Inf. Seeker	-.21	-.01
Surveillance-oriented Inf. Seeker	.32	.45
Politically-oriented Inf. Seeker	.21	.27
Entertainment Seeker	-.13	-.21
Self-awareness Seeker	.16	.31
Spiritual-guidance Seeker	.07	.30

n = 35
R2 = .16 Adjusted R2 = 0

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studied are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

Table 3

Evaluations of LWI as Predictors of Gatekeepers' Use of News Service

Evaluation	betaa	r
Accuracy	.70	.47
Objectivity	-.56	-.43
Quality of Writing	-.11	-.10
Timeliness	-.23	-.10
Importance	-.24	.00

n = 28
R^2 = .60 Adjusted R^2 = .42

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studied are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

Table 4

Personal Characteristics as Predictors of Gatekeepers' Use of Lutheran World Information

Personal Characteristic	beta[a]	r
Years of Professional Experience	-.09	-.18
Being Lutheran[b]	-.33	-.38
Study of Religion in College[c]	.25	.25
Study of Journalism in College[c]	.29	.25
Being Male[b]	.25	.35
Earned Advanced Degrees	.15	.08

n = 30
R^2 = .38 Adjusted R^2 = .01

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studied are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

[b] Because of the way the religious preference of gatekeepers was coded, a negative value of beta and r indicates that being Lutheran or a member of a closely allied faith is associated with use of Lutheran World Information.

[c] Dummy variable analysis was used to include the study of journalism, study of religion, sex and having earned an advanced degree in the regression analysis. Positive values of beta and r on these variables indicate, respectively, that having studied journalism, having studied religion, being male, and having earned an advanced degree are associated with use of LWI.

Table 5

Situational Constraints as Predictors of
Gatekeepers' Use of Lutheran World Information

Situational Constraints	beta[a]	r
Circulation	-.11	-.04
News Hole	.17	.09
Percent Lutherans in Community	.40	.34
Level of Competition	-.08	-.05

n = 35
R^2 = .15 Adjusted R^2 = 0

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studied are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

Table 6

The Best Predictors of Gatekeepers' Use of Lutheran World Information

Predictor	beta[a]	r
Gatekeepers' Interest in News of Other Religions	.19	.29
Audience as Surveillance-Oriented Information Seeker	.43	.45
Gatekeepers' Religion (Being Lutheran)[a]	-.11	-.27
Percent Lutherans in Circulation Area	.20	.34
Gatekeepers' Evaluation of LWI (Accuracy)	.28	.47

n = 28
R^2 = .48 Adjusted R^2 = .24

[a] Statistical significance is not reported because the journalists studied are a population of those receiving Lutheran World Information.

[b] Because of the way the religious preference of gatekeepers was coded, a negative value of beta and r indicates that being Lutheran or a member of a closely allied faith is associated with use of Lutheran World Information.